# CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for customizing a computer system, comprising the steps of:

receiving a customer order, wherein the customer order specifies customization information for a computer system;

programming customization parameters into a configuration mechanism, wherein the configuration parameters corresponding to the customization information;

sending the configuration mechanism to a customer; and

sending a computer system to the customer, the computer system being adapted to receive the configuration mechanism and to customize the computer system according to the configuration parameters stored in the configuration mechanism.

2. The method of customizing a computer system of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

providing instructions to the customer to install the configuration mechanism in the computer system.

3. The method of customizing a computer system of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

providing instructions to the customer to initiate a boot process;

wherein, in response to the initiation of a boot process, the computer system customizes an operating system according to the configuration parameters stored in the configuration mechanism.

4.  The method of customizing a computer system of claim 2, further comprising the step of:

providing instructions to the customer to initiate a boot process;

wherein, the computer system includes a data storage device having a first partition including a first operating system, and a second partition including a second operating system and, in response to the initiation of the boot process, the computer system first boots to the second partition to execute the second operating system which causes the first operating system in the first partition to be customized according to the configuration parameters stored in the configuration mechanism and, upon completion of the customization of the first operating system, the computer system boots to the first partition and executes the first operating system.

5.  The method of customizing a computer system of claim 2, wherein the configuration mechanism is included in an adapter pluggable into the computer system, the adapter including a communications port, further comprising the steps of:

storing the customization information, as specified in the order, in a memory;

converting the customization information stored in the memory to customization parameters;

loading the customization parameters from the memory to the configuration mechanism via the communications port of the adapter.

6. A method for customizing a computer system comprising:

(a)     storing customization information for the computer system in a configuration mechanism;

(b)     coupling the configuration mechanism to the computer system; and

(c)     retrieving the customization information in the configuration mechanism by the

computer system to customize the computer system.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the configuration mechanism is a PCI adapter.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the coupling step (b) includes plugging the configuration mechanism into the computer system such that the computer system accesses the configuration mechanism.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the storing step (a) includes programming the configuration mechanism with the customization information manually at a distribution site.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the configuration mechanism includes at least one communication port.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the storing step (a) includes downloading the customization information from a server to the configuration mechanism via the at least one communication port.

12. The method of claim 6, further including:

(d)     shipping the computer system and the configuration mechanism separately but in the same shipment to a customer site prior to the coupling step (b).

13. The method of claim 6, wherein the retrieving step (c) includes

   (c1)    performing a first system boot; and

   (c2)    querying the configuration mechanism for the customization

information.

14. A method for deploying a customized computer system to a customer site

   comprising:

   (a)    storing customization information for the computer system in a configuration

module, wherein the configuration module is an adapter card; and

   (b)    shipping the computer system and the configuration module separately but in

the same shipment to the customer site,

   wherein after the configuration module is coupled to the computer system at the

customer site, the configuration information is retrieved by the computer system during a first

system boot.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the storing step (a) includes programming the

   configuration module with the customization information manually at a distribution

   site.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the configuration module includes at least one

   communication port.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the storing step (a) includes downloading the

   customization information from a server to the configuration module via the at least

   one communication port.